

# M G A W

January 2002

[www.ori.state.ri.us/  
youthserv/mgoose/](http://www.ori.state.ri.us/youthserv/mgoose/)

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*Melody Lloyd Allen*

The Public Library Association (PLA), a division of the American Library Association, has undertaken an Early Literacy Initiative in partnership with the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), a division of the National Institutes of Health. Their report, *Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction*, has information useful to parents, child care providers and public librarians. PLA has been disseminating information about the report and developing model public library programs incorporating this research.

PLA contracted with Dr. Grover C. Whitehurst and Dr. Christopher Lonigan, well-known researchers in emergent literacy, to develop a model program for parents and caregivers. The premise of these research-based materials is to enlist parents and caregivers as partners in preparing their children for learning to read and to provide the most effective methods to achieve this end for the distinctive phases of a young child's emergent literacy – pre-talkers, talkers and pre-readers.

The intent of this partnership is to firmly establish public libraries as a partner in the educational continuum, and to validate our contributions by linking our activities to relevant research and evaluation. The model programs are currently being field tested and evaluated. Public librarians can partner with the young child's most important teachers – parents and caregivers – to influence a child's development.

In this issue, we have reproduced an article by Ellen Fader, Youth Services Coordinator, Multnomah (OR) Public Library, from the PLA website ([www.pla.org/projects/preschool/preschool.html](http://www.pla.org/projects/preschool/preschool.html)). In subsequent issues, we will include some of the age specific tips.

# Professionals Forum

## How Storytimes for Preschool Children Can Incorporate Current Research by Ellen Fader

Public libraries have been presenting fun and interactive story times for many years, engaging children and helping them love books and libraries. These programs typically include a combination of short and long books, music and action rhymes. Children are surrounded with stimulating speech and interesting topics, creating a language and literacy experience beneficial to children's development. These storytimes model for parents how to read enthusiastically and involve their children in books. Parents observe their children's interest and excitement and enjoy together what library staff presents. These programs have excelled in developing a child's print motivation, an important emergent literacy building block.

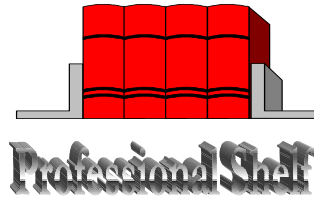
Recent research in the field of emergent literacy has led to the development of new best practices for public libraries that want to help parents and teachers of preschool children get ready to read. Storytimes that incorporate these practices differ in subtle ways from the storytimes described above; however, building in the early literacy information does not change the basic nature of these programs. Storytimes continue to present the quality characteristics listed above but also contain some additional information for parents and caregivers concerning the reasons and rewards for reading to children. Library staff who present age-specific story times, from babies to preschoolers, can add short, instructive phrases to help adults who are present understand how children are benefiting from the activities and to show them ways they can facilitate children's literacy development. In this way, the library helps to increase parents' and caregivers' skills in developing narrative skills, vocabulary, letter knowledge and phonological sensitivity, in addition to print motivation.

For example, during story time for babies, the storyteller might tell parents, "Did you know that hearing language actually changes the structure of babies' brains? Language builds more connections between neurons in the brain. So the more you talk with your baby, the more connections she will have in her brain." Also: "Sometimes reading looks like chewing. That's okay because he's learning to feel comfortable with books. Babies who play with books will find it easier to learn to read later on."

During a story time for toddlers, the storyteller might add, "Toddlers are learning about nine new words a day; books are a wonderful source for this growing vocabulary!" Also: "Toddlers understand many more words than they say, so be sure to talk to them all day long about what you are doing and about what they are doing."

Library staff will also demonstrate specific techniques that facilitate emergent literacy, since how adults read to preschoolers is as important as how frequently children listen to stories. For example, librarians will occasionally model dialogic reading by asking questions in a toddler group so that the child becomes the teller of the story. Because a central basis for learning to read is understanding that words are made up of smaller sounds, librarians will play language games in preschool storytime to demonstrate for parents how to encourage phonological or phonemic awareness. Parents and caregivers will learn how to have fun with phonemes by having children complete the rhymes in songs... To encourage narrative skills and to help children learn sequence, the storyteller will occasionally recap a story: "First it started to rain, then the puppy played in the mud puddle, then she got all dirty, and had to get a bath!"

An important thing to remember is that storytime will still be fun if these techniques are used judiciously: some in every program but not every technique with every book. Researchers say that children learn more from books when they are actively involved.



## Starting Out Right; A Guide to Promoting Children's Reading Success By the National Research Council

With literacy problems plaguing as many as four in ten children in the US, this book best describes how to help children succeed in reading. It identifies the most important questions and explores the authoritative answers of how children can grow into readers!

- ✓ What are the key elements all children need in order to become good readers?
- ✓ How can we prevent reading difficulties starting with infants and into the early grades?
- ✓ What concepts about language and literacy should be included in beginning reading instruction?



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## MOTHER GOOSE SERIES IN OHIO EXPANDS TO INCLUDE MATH!!

The *Mother Goose Asks "WHY?"* program continues to be a very popular program for librarians and early childhood educators in Ohio. One of the best parts of the program is that it allows parents to experience "science" first hand and gives them permission to be "kids" again. Since its inception, the Ohio MGAW program has been received very well. Recently, we have included MGAW under LSTA funding.

(cont..from p.2 "MGAW SITES")

Libraries can apply for funds to support *Mother Goose Asks "WHY?"* along with *You Can Count on Mother Goose*.

Last year, a total of nine libraries submitted LSTA grants to support MGAW. We awarded six libraries funding for the projects. This past year we also held another formal training session on November 16<sup>th</sup> for librarians and early childhood educators, here at the State Library's facilities.

We will probably host another session this Spring or early Fall, 2002. The total trained thus far is over 400. In addition to the trainings, we also do special sessions for the Ohio Department of Education Early Childhood Conference and several Adult Basic Literacy Education sites.

Since so many librarians and early childhood educators had been introduced to MGAW, when they heard that there was a new math component, they were equally enthusiastic! YOU CAN COUNT ON MOTHER GOOSE was introduced through two workshops on October 27<sup>th</sup> and December 7<sup>th</sup>.

We tried to cover as many aspects of the program as possible, including how to secure funding to support the program. Missy Lodge, LSTA Program Coordinator, spoke about how to procure grant support. Missy has gone above and beyond and has also prepared a special tip sheet for those applying for MGAW grants, (as well as other Family Literacy grants).

We feel that both the MGAW program and the YCCOMG program fill an important need in the library and early childhood community. As part of our new strategic plan for the State Library, we have included MGAW and YCCOMG and we will be reviewing our implementation of these programs in Ohio. Our overall focus is to emphasize the need for librarians to form partnerships with local early childhood educators to implement these programs.

We will be promoting this idea through a newly designed web site, special e-mail lists, workshops, and presentations. In addition, we will require future attendees of our workshops to come with their community partners.

We hope this will promote the idea of strong linkages with the early childhood community and support for the local public library. These strategies will also allow us to evaluate the programs for future implementation.



### *Melody Lloyd Allen*

I'd like to share with you some excellent picture books published in 2001 that could be used in the *Mother Goose Programs*.

On January 21, 2002, the American Library Association will announce the winner of the Caldecott Medal for the most distinguished American picture book published in 2001. After 10:00 AM that morning, go to [www.ala.org/alsc/caldecott.html](http://www.ala.org/alsc/caldecott.html) for the results.

*Clever Beatrice* by Margaret Willey is derived from French-Canadian stories or contes from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. In the familiar folktale **pattern** of three challenges, a young girl takes on a giant and wins through clever **problem solving**. Try pausing in your reading after each challenge and brainstorming ways for our heroine to outwit the mighty giant.

*Fannie in the Kitchen* by Deborah Hopkinson tells the story of how Fannie Farmer started writing exact instructions for measuring and cooking to aid young Marcia Shaw, a child in her care. She went on to teach at the Boston Cooking School and to publish in 1896 the Boston Cooking School Cookbook, now known as the Fannie Farmer Cookbook. The

illustrations are very amusing with lots to discover. You can practice **measuring** precisely and following Fannie's tips as her recipe for griddle cakes (pancakes) is included.

*Car Wash* by twins Sandra and Susan Steen models a delightful game of imagination as a brother and sister pretend that their ride through the car wash is really a deep sea diving trip in a submarine. The collage technique set on painted backgrounds used for the illustrations could inspire young artists on their own make believe journeys. **Observe** closely which materials were included in the book's creation.

*Baloney (Henry P.)* by Jon Scieszka invites all readers to figure out the **meaning of words** as they appear in the context of the pictures and the text. An alien child tells a tall tale to the teacher about why he is late for szkola (school), using words from many languages. A "decoder" provides meanings and the source language. Kids can write their own stories using a translator like Babelfish at <http://world.altavista.com> and illustrate the meaning clues.

*Waiting for Wings* by Lois Ehlert is designed as a half-size book within a book. A caterpillar's development is presented on the smaller pages. When it **grows and changes** into a butterfly, it soars onto full-size pages. This is a colorful depiction of a life **cycle**, showing **habitat** for the butterfly, and even including information on starting a butterfly garden.

*Albert* by Donna Jo Napoli presents a magical tale of a recluse whose life is changed by a family of cardinals who mistake his outstretched arm for a branch of a nearby tree. The birds' **habitat** is otherwise faithfully rendered, and children separating from their parents will appreciate the lesson on fear of flying away from the safe and familiar. Discuss what the cardinals are shown eating and how they can survive in the winter. Cardinals prefer a tray style feeder if you want to build one. Or go bird watching and try to spot the bright red male and the brownish female.



## WEBSITES to WANDER...

[www.nifl.gov](http://www.nifl.gov)

### The National Institute for Literacy

is an independent federal organization whose mission is to ensure that the highest quality of literacy services is available to these adults. By fostering communication, collaboration, and innovation, NIFL works to build and strengthen a comprehensive, unified system for literacy in the U.S.

[www.americanliteracy.com](http://www.americanliteracy.com)

### The American Literacy Council

provides resources and assistance to persons and organizations who are involved in the literacy crisis in America. The organization provides software and publications that seek or promote solutions to the problem of illiteracy in English speaking countries.

One primary product of the Council is Sound-Write (TM), a Windows-based writing program with instant audiovisual feedback and a 50,000 word vocabulary.

[www.icasl.org](http://www.icasl.org)

### International Center for the Advancement of Scientific Literacy

To prepare for the future, all citizens must attain some level of scientific literacy. In a series of studies dating back into the 1970's Professor Jon Miller declared: **Not more than 7 percent of Americans qualify as scientifically literate by relatively lenient standards.** Recognizing this serious problem, governments in most industrialized nations are making concerted efforts to address the issue of pervasive illiteracy.

## What's New!



### January 8 – February 1, 2002 RISD Artist Bob Thornton

#### *Nursery Rhyme Portraits:*

##### *A Painter's Fantasy*

Robert Thornton's paintings of familiar nursery rhymes are fertile territory for an artist known for his wry and edgy humor. Ten large, expansive canvases are whimsical interpretations of Mother Goose tales.

A percentage of the sales from this exhibit will benefit **The RI Mother Goose Programs.**

**Bert Gallery** is located at  
540 South Water Street, Providence, RI  
(401) 751-2628

*Hours: M-F 11am-5pm, Sat 12-4pm*

### Providence Public Library February 28 – April 11

## "GO FIGURE!!!"

[www.ala.org/publicprograms/gofigure/](http://www.ala.org/publicprograms/gofigure/)

An Interactive Math Exhibit...

Interactive, kid-sized displays, inspired by familiar children's books and characters, bring math alive for 3 to 7 year old children. Learn about early math concepts, such as shapes, patterns and sizes. Solve problems, measure things and play with numbers! *The Doorbell Rang* is one of the featured books. The exhibit is presented in English and Spanish. This national traveling exhibit is sponsored by the Minnesota Children's Museum and the American Library Association.



*Mother Goose Asks "Why?"* was developed by the Vermont Center for the Book in conjunction with the Montshire Museum of Science and the Vermont Department of Libraries.



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**Link up with Mother Goose Online At:**  
[www.ori.state.ri.us/youthserv/mgoose/](http://www.ori.state.ri.us/youthserv/mgoose/)